

## **MEETING MINUTES**

**Committee Name:** Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Committee

**Date, Time and Location of Meeting:**

November 1, 2007, 7:30 AM, Selectmen's Room

**Members Present:**

Harry Beyer, Elissa Brown, Gerry Boyle, Ken Miller, Barbara Pike, Andrea Siani, Jim Terry.

**Members Absent:** Jim Coutre

**Others Present:**

Dinny McIntyre, Marcia Rasmussen, a number of citizens

**Materials Distributed:** none

**Record of Issues discussed:**

Jim Terry read the memo Jim Coutre had prepared with his thoughts about warrant articles 9 and 10. He urged support of both articles. The memo had been forwarded electronically to committee members.

Elissa described the potential informational handouts she had prepared of background information on the MEPA process and Massachusetts Highway design process. Committee members thought the committee should provide these as handouts for citizens at the special Town Meeting. Individuals are to get suggested revisions to Elissa ASAP.

Barbara Pike related that the NRC will have a statement about both articles, but does not plan to have a handout.

The committee began with a discussion of article 9. Jim T related that the Selectmen and NRC were recommending no action.

Ken thought the article was redundant and confusing

Elissa indicated this was easier to oppose, there is an easy to understand process, and this article says change the well established process. The Town has gone beyond what is necessary.

Barbara stated the wording is not clear as to what is requested, 'no cost estimate is given, and there is no funding source.

Gerry indicated we have far exceed requirements

Andrea indicated we have brought more attention to the environment, we have a process and she doesn't see a need to change

Harry stated the article is redundant and will delay the process

Jim T indicated he agreed with the comments made and did not have anything further to add

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the committee unanimously voted to recommend NO ACTION on article 9.

Discussion then followed on article 10. Jim T related that the Selectmen were supporting article 10, but the NRC is not supporting it. He understood the Selectmen's rationale was that approval by Town Meeting should be a definitive vote of Town preference as to the preliminary design to be submitted to the state. Selectmen had also stated informally (not a vote) that they would take the 25% preliminary design to Town meeting even if article 10 fails. Dinny was asked whether that would be true even if article 10 failed by a wide margin. She responded that she could not speak for the whole committee.

Barbara indicated the article refers to abandoned railroad rights of way. She indicated the rail corridor has not been abandoned. She asked whether article 10 would apply to the 0.1 mile in Concord that will be part of the rotary project (the crossing of route 2)

Andrea referenced the fear that has been generated when the 25% design is submitted to MassHighway – MHD does something scary, but we don't know what. The process goes to Town Meeting if the Town decides it wants funding for 75% design. Lots of citizens do not know the process.

Elissa looked at the issue as a regular citizen and then as a committee member. As a citizen, she considers article 10 as micromanaging the process, so she would vote no. As a committee member she understands the Selectmen's objectives for a Town Meeting vote of approval, but she does not believe a vote will satisfy those who are vocal unless the design meets all of their criteria. She would vote no, as she sees article 10 as a delaying tactic.

Harry sees the article as easing tensions in the community

Ken opposes it because of all the excess baggage caused by saying "all" possible rail trails rather than just the BFRT

Gerry sees this as an effort to delay or stop the process – scare tactics have been used

Andrea is nervous about the process suggested and the precedent a yes vote would set. We should emphasize that we have invited citizens to be part of the process all along.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the committee voted 5 to 2 to recommend NO ACTION on article 10. Jim T and Harry voted against the motion and stated they would have voted for no position on the article, primarily because of the Selectmen's position. Both indicated they will personally vote against article 10.

The committee then briefly discussed points to be included in the presentations. Elissa and Jim T were directed to prepare and make the presentations at Town meeting. Elissa will distribute suggested slides to the rest of the committee quickly for comment and revision.

The committee set the following future meeting dates in November – the 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> at the regular time and location. On November 8 the committee will finalize the location

in the White Pond area and handicap parking. Members are to also have what additional information they need on trail surface on that date. On November 9, VHB will meet with the MBTA (a many times postponed meeting). On November 15 the committee will discuss gates and bollards and the trail through West Concord center - assuming VHB has a productive meeting with the MBTA. On the 29<sup>th</sup>, we may have a discussion on trail surfaces. Can we obtain the pros and cons of non asphalt surfaces on the Charles River Greenway?

#### Citizen comments

Concern was voiced about the lack of ability to modify design once we get to 75% design. Marcia gave an example of the Crosby's Corner project has quarterly meetings with representatives from Lincoln, Concord and Acton. During the 75% design, which has taken more than two years so far, MHD has made a number of revisions reflecting concerns and needs of the communities.

An example of a project taken to Town Meeting before 25% design was the waste water treatment study.

A citizen commented on observing high traffic volumes along Old Marlboro when children might ride bikes to school. The suggestion was to consider an over-pass or under-pass for the rail trail where it crosses Old Marlboro.